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Against Viet Nam War

MR. EDITOR:

I hope intelligent Republicans will unite with other concerned Americans who, motivated by both enlightened self-interest and compassion for the people of South Viet Nam, are demanding immediate political settlement of the Viet Nam situation with military withdrawal before the pressures for escalation of the war involve us in a nuclear holocaust. I hope they will send copies of their letters to the Republican candidates indicating that they do not support the suicidal portions of the party platform implicit in commitments to "Victory."

Even the ~~C. I. A.~~ notorious for methods and purposes which many find morally indefensible, has the sense to officially admit the unacceptability of military offensives (from the National Observer):

"The U. S. possesses greater striking power than the USSR and could wreak much greater damage in the USSR than the latter could in the U. S. Nevertheless . . . a general nuclear war—whether brought about by design, accident, or miscalculation—would kill many millions of people, destroy the capital accumulations of many decades, render large sections of the earth uninhabitable, and destroy the power of most of the modern nations of the world.

"In this age of mobile striking forces and hardened missile sites, it does not appear possible to build a military force capable of destroying an enemy's capabilities and simultaneously protecting oneself from unacceptable damage."

We should not allow even more extremist and less knowledgeable minorities to promote military "offensive on all fronts." This would destroy our way of life, present or hoped for, much more rapidly and completely than any ideological trends they oppose possibly could. Communism would simply be advanced by destruction of the capital assets of our own country and the rest of the world. It would be an empty "victory" for capitalism and freedom would be meaningless in the ensuing chaos (even more meaningless, if possible, that it is today for most of the people of war-torn South Viet Nam whose dictatorial governments we have been sustaining in a mockery of the concept of freedom!)

Military victory is an obsolete idea. To win against communism that ideology must be confronted with the existent condition of a better way of life created with the help of the free world for the peoples they seek to convert.

We have for many years been doing the opposite in Viet Nam.

The Democratic Administrations should have ended this inherited war long ago, by negotiation. Let us put our real national interests ahead of partisan politics and demand that they do it now. There is no indication that a new administration would end this war without at least sacrificing many, many more of our husbands and sons and possibly, with their simple-minded illusions about military world leadership, involve us in a final nuclear holocaust.

—KATHLEEN GESNER,
7328 Lakeside Drive

CPYRGHT

Letters to The Times

Tonkin Linked to War Aim

Gulf Incidents Manufactured, It Is Charged, as Provocation

TO THE EDITOR:

Your Sept. 23 editorial "The Tonkin Gulf Mystery" is an extremely disturbing comment on the militant attitude even among the high-placed in Washington and the general public naïveté that basks in the bright sun of patriotism.

For an understanding of the so-called mystery of why the United States of America is deeply involved in South Vietnam, it might be well to recall what Van Wyck Brooks had to say in 1921: "Few Americans know, even today really know—I mean apprehend—that America is an empire, with all the paraphernalia of imperialism." This is an honest statement, one made at a time when we were not yet suffering from the "Red" psychosis.

While American imperialism was not too flagrant, abusive and offensive in 1921, it has become so in 1964 due to our position as leader and protector of the free world, so-called. The former imperialist powers of stature in Europe prior to World War II turned over much of their mandate to the United States during and after the war.

Political Manipulating

In terms of actual colonies, the United States may not be accused of political imperialism; however, we certainly are guilty of political manipulating. Indeed, we have long been in the business of making and breaking rulers in our private Western Hemisphere. Only one really frustrates us, because we cannot manipulate Dr. Castro despite the machinations of the Central Intelligence Agency.

There is really no mystery to our present involvement in the making and breaking of rulers in South Vietnam. This is merely an extension of our imperialistic role. Let us be honest, at least with ourselves. We have no defensible position before world opinion that we do not influence via the United States Information Agency.

The Tonkin incidents have been manufactured. We are itching for a war and we will have it as retaliation "against bullets and torpedoes that—even accepting the official interpretation—were never fired." Surely The New York Times is able to solve the terrible mystery in the Tonkin Gulf.

ROBERT W. HARPER,

Chairman, Department of Human Relations, University of Maryland, College Park, Md., Sept. 23, 1964.